

## Message Text

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ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 FEA-01 ACDA-07 CIAE-00 INR-07

IO-13 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-07 NRC-05 DODE-00

ERDA-05 SS-15 PM-04 /085 W  
----- 001856

R 032130Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8994

INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 9989

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH, ENRG, PARM, BR

SUBJ: BRAZIL'S REQUEST FOR HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM

REF: (A) MOFFET/RUSER TELCON, NOV. 12, 1976, (B) BRASILIA 9412,  
(C) STATE 271078

1. SUMMARY. EMBASSY HAS REEMPHASIZED TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY THE TECHNICAL NATURE OF THE U.S. INQUIRY ON BRAZIL'S NEEDS FOR HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM (HEU). IN CURRENT CLIMATE OF CONCERN OVER U.S. NON-PROLIFERATION INITIATIVES, EVEN A TECHNICAL INQUIRY OF THIS KIND IS INEVITABLY READ WITHIN GOB AS A SIGN OF A HARDENING U.S. STAND. END SUMMARY.

2. IN RECENT FOLLOWUP CALL ON FIRST SECRETARY MARCELO DIDIER, EMBOFF STRESSED ONCE MORE THE TECHNICAL NATURE OF U.S. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON BRAZIL'S HEU NEEDS (REFTELCON A). EMBOFF NOTED THAT THE U.S. INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE REVIEWING BRAZIL'S APPLICATION WISHED TO HAVE A QUICK FACTUAL CONFIRMATION THAT THE RESEARCH REACTOR IN QUESTION NEEDED HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM. EMBOFF REITERATED THAT THE REQUEST FOR CONFIRMATION WAS PART OF THE NORMAL REVIEW PROCESS FOR AN APPLICATION OF THIS KIND, AND THAT THEREFORE IT DID NOT REPRESENT  
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A CHANGE IN U.S. POLICY CONCERNING THE SUPPLY OF HEU FOR

RESEARCH USE.

3. DIDIER SAID THE AIDE-MEMOIRE HAD BEEN TRANSMITTED TO HERVASIO DE CARVALHO, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL NUCLEAR ENERGY COMMISSION (CNEN). CARVALHO WOULD PROVIDE THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WITH THE REQUESTED INFORMATION. DIDIER INTIMATED THAT BECAUSE OF THE "POLITICAL" IMPORTANCE OF THE U.S. REQUEST, THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAD APPROVED THE MINISTRY'S TELEGRAM TO CARVALHO.

4. COMMENT. WE HAVE STRESSED ON TWO OCCASIONS TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY THE TECHNICAL NATURE OF THE INQUIRY. WE DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT THIS HAS DETERRED GOB OFFICIALS FROM INFERRING THAT THE USG MEANS TO CONVEY A SIGNAL AND THAT THE U.S. INQUIRY REFLECTS THE GENERAL HARDENING OF THE U.S. STANCE IN THIS AREA. THESE OFFICIALS MAY REASON THAT THE BROAD NON-PROLIFERATION CONTEXT USED TO JUSTIFY THE INQUIRY (THE CONTEXT, OUTLINED IN THE AIDE-MEMOIRE, IS THAT IN REF C, PARAS 1-3) INDICATES MORE THAN JUST A REQUEST FOR CONFIRMATION OF A SIMPLE TECHNICAL FACT ABOUT REACTOR OPERATING CHARACTERISTICS. ADDRESSING THE INQUIRY DIRECTLY TO CNEN RATHER THAN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY (CONTRARY TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S STANDING INSTRUCTIONS TO THE EMBASSY) WOULD NOT HAVE DISCOURAGED BRAZILIAN INFERENCES ABOUT A U.S. SIGNAL.

5. AS THE EMBASSY HAS NOTED IN OTHER REPORTS, BRAZILIAN OFFICIALS ARE DEEPLY APPREHENSIVE OVER THE NEW U.S. INITIATIVES IN THE NUCLEAR AREA, AND TEND TO INTERPRET ALL ACTIONS IN THIS AREA AS POLITICALLY-MOTIVATED AND AIMED AT DISRUPTING THE BRAZILIAN-GERMAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT (AT LEAST THE ENRICHMENT AND REPROCESSING PARTS). WE DOUBT THAT GOB WILL BE RESPONDING TO EMBASSY'S INQUIRY IN NEAR FUTURE, AND CONSIDER IT MORE LIKELY THAT THIS ISSUE WILL BE HELD OVER BY GOB FOR EXPECTED DISCUSSIONS WITH NEW ADMINISTRATION ON NUCLEAR ISSUES. IN FACT, EMBASSY KNOWS THAT US INQUIRY HAS NEVER BEEN REFERRED TO TECHNICAL LEVEL IN SAO PAULO. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT RESEARCH REACTOR IN SAO PAULO IN FACT IS OF US

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ORIGIN, AND THUS ITS TECHNICAL CHARACTERISTICS PRESUMABLY ARE FULLY KNOWN TO USG. WE THEREFORE BELIEVE THAT, IF THE REVIEW PROCEDURES PERMIT THIS, IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR EXECUTIVE BRANCH TO PROCEED WITH REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO NRC ON BASIS OF DATA AVAILABLE TO USG THAN TO AWAIT GOB TECHNICAL REPLY.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** RESEARCH, POLICIES, NUCLEAR REACTORS, EXPORT LICENSES, URANIUM 235, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION, GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 03 DEC 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976BRASIL09989  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760449-0802  
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**Image Path:**  
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**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION OES  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 BRASILIA 9412, 76 STATE 271078  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 12 JUL 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <12 JUL 2004 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <13 JUL 2004 by GolinoFR>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** BRAZIL'S REQUEST FOR HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM  
**TAGS:** TECH, ENRG, PARM, BR, US  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006